

VZCZCXRO6821
RR RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHAD #0540/01 1511250
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 311250Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2530
INFO RUEANFA/NRC WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 8292
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0912

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000540

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND ISN/RA (STUKALIN)
NRC FOR MFREELAND
AMMAN FOR ESTH HUB OFFICER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [SENV](#) [MNUC](#) [PGOV](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: NRC VISIT HIGHLIGHTS US-UAE NUCLEAR COOPERATION POTENTIAL

REFS: A) ABU DHABI 526
B) ABU DHABI 491
C) ABU DHABI 478
D) STATE 34777
E) ABU DHABI 157
F) 08 ABU DHABI 1432

ABU DHABI 00000540 001.2 OF 002

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The May 19-21 visit of Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Executive Director for Operations Bill Borchardt and Director of International Programs Margie Doane to Abu Dhabi and Dubai provided an opportunity to engage key UAE nuclear officials on regulatory issues of safety, security, and safeguards. UAE officials said they plan to work closely with the NRC as they establish similar regulatory structures to oversee the UAE's nuclear power program (Refs B, C, E, and F). Specific interests included establishing formal cooperation through MOUs, benefitting from NRC training opportunities and visits to NRC facilities. END SUMMARY.

REGULATION

12. (SBU) In a May 20 meeting with the UAE Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR, under formation), Director General (designate, and former NRC official) Bill Travers said FANR will, like the NRC, be responsible for regulatory safety, security and safeguards. Travers asked that FANR and the NRC begin discussing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation. Until the 123 Agreement for nuclear cooperation is approved, Travers asked that the NRC provide appropriate insight and advice about steps UAE entities should take now in preparation for future cooperative agreements. Travers also inquired about the possibility of seconding FANR staff to the NRC. Borchardt and Doane said that initial discussions about formalizing cooperation could begin, but would be dependent on the ultimate approval of the 123 Agreement. As FANR is a federal body, it may serve as the conduit for NRC cooperation with local (e.g., Emirate-level) entities.

SECURITY AND SAFEGUARDS

13. (SBU) NRC officials also met with Sheikh Ahmed bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Critical National Infrastructure Authority (CNIA), to discuss civilian power plant security issues. (Note: CNIA is expected to assume responsibility for site security at future UAE nuclear power plants. End Note.) Sheikh Ahmed asked for NRC advice, noting that his team is ready to lay a foundation for future cooperation with the NRC. Borchardt emphasized the importance of fully integrating nuclear safety and security during both the design and operations phases. Borchardt suggested Sheikh

Ahmed plan to tour NRC facilities during his planned July visit to the United States. Doane discussed an Agency to Agency Arrangement with CNIA to allow the exchange of information regarding regulation of security at civilian nuclear facilities. Sheikh Ahmed said he also hopes to expand cooperation with the US Department of Energy (DOE) and to visit DOE facilities.

¶4. (SBU) On May 21, Doane met with Sulaiman Shaheen, Director of the Federal Environmental Agency's Radiation Protection and Control Department (RPCD) to discuss import and export licensing for radioactive materials. Shaheen explained UAE's licensing procedures and record-keeping, noting that RPCD security and safety procedures are based on IAEA recommendations. To import a radioactive source, importers must: 1) obtain a no-objection statement from RPCD, 2) provide all shipment details, and 3) present delivery order, permits, etc. when the source arrives in the UAE. RPCD also regulates source transit and re-export (as the UAE does not produce/manufacture any radioactive sources). Shaheen said RPCD approval is required before any radioactive materials could enter the UAE at any port (air, land or sea) and that the RPCD enjoys strong relations with Emirate-level customs and environmental officials. Shaheen said that the RPCD is expected to be rolled into FANR when the latter is established and takes over security of nuclear and radioactive material controls (Refs C and D).

¶5. (SBU) Noting RPCD's good cooperation with the IAEA and regional countries, Shaheen proposed the United States and UAE consider exchanging information about related licenses. He also expressed interest in NRC human resource development programs and training opportunities. Doane mentioned that the NRC hoped to offer a training program on radioactive sources in the fall.

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

ABU DHABI 00000540 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (U) Borchardt also spoke at the GCC Nuclear Summit conference in Dubai, which was attended by a number of regional power industry officials. Borchardt's message on the importance of a strong independent regulator was an essential part of a broader discussion about the development of peaceful nuclear power. Participants and the media asked a number of informed questions, providing an opportunity to share US views on the sensitive and high-profile discussion of nuclear energy in the Gulf. This message was also echoed in local media coverage of the event (Ref A).
OLSON